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IN A WINTER CITY BY OUIDA.

IN ONE VOLUME.

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IN A WINTER CITY

A SKETCH.

BY

O U I D A,

AUTHOR OF "PUCK," "SIGNA," "PASCARÈL," ETC.

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LEIPZIG

BERNIARD TAUCHNITZ

1876.

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IN A WINTER CITY.

A SKETCH.

CHAPTER I.

FLORALIA was once a city of great fame. It stands upon an historical river. It is adorned with all that the Arts can assemble of beauty, of grace, and of majesty. Its chronicles blaze with heroical deeds and with the achievements of genius. Great men have been bred within its walls; men so great that the world has never seen their like again.

Floralia, in her liberties, in her citizens, in her poets and painters and sculptors, once upon a time had few rivals, perhaps, indeed, no equals, upon earth.

By what strange irony of fate, by what singular cynical caprice of accident, has this fairest of cities, with her time-honoured towers lifted to her radiant skies, become the universal hostelry of cosmopolitan fashion and of fashionable idleness? Sad vicissitudes of fallen fortunes!—to such base uses do the greatest come.

It is Belisarius turned croupier to a gaming-table;